



The Irish Times would like to send you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow

Business

Judge says law firm in HR companies 'spy' case

Comments tied to letter Hayes Solicitors LLP wrote denying any knowledge of particular surveillance allegedly carried out over business 'spy' affair

Expand



THE IRISH TIMES

Subscribe

Sign In

Solicitors LLP on behalf of Deel Inc.

Thu Jul 10 2025 - 14:30



A High Court judge has said he was unfair to a law firm over the content of a letter it wrote denying any knowledge of particular surveillance allegedly

carried out on the

Mr Justice Brian Cr

to the letter written

US-headquartered

headquartered, who employed global payroll manager Keith O'Brien until his espionage activities on behalf of Deel were discovered.



The Irish Times would like to send you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow

business “spy” affair.

ad said in relation

half of Deel Inc. The

Rippling, also US

Mr O'Brien, of Balrothery, north Dublin, admitted being paid €5,500 a month by Deel and has been co-operating with Rippling having expressed regret for his “participation in this espionage”. He is a defendant in the Rippling case against Deel and others but no reliefs are being sought against him.

Mr O'Brien brought his own case alleging intimidation and harassment from surveillance of him and his family by what were initially only “persons unknown” but later private investigation firms of Mark Murran, also known as Rock Investigations, and Cliona Woods of Gotham Services became the defendants.

READ MORE

French ambassador's residence, once Ireland's most expensive house, gets a full refurbishment



From 'LID-ill or LEED-ill?' to bargain canoes: 25 lessons from Lidl's 25 years in Ireland



Germany might have solved Ireland's urban EV charging problem



Rosie O'Donnell: 'People say, you moved to Ireland, just forget about Trump. I can't. The crimes are endless'



They strongly deny any overt surveillance or claims of harassment and intimidation.

During the hearing of applications related to Mr O'Brien's case, the court heard that before he brought legal proceedings his lawyers wrote to Hayes solicitors requesting the surveillance stop.

Hayes responded with surveillance being surveilled Mr O'Bri



The Irish Times would like to send you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow

One of the cars late was driven by Mark

no knowledge” of followed and

while the other

Mr Justice Cregan expressed concern that officers of the court (Hayes) had written a letter which was either a “blatant lie or a misrepresentation”.

It had also made him briefly question whether he could rely on another Hayes letter in another case he was dealing with but he did accept that letter.

Paul Gardiner SC, instructed by Hayes for Deel, objected to the judge’s description in a case in which fair procedures had yet to be gone through.

He said it was unfair to Hayes.

Mr Gardiner also said the letter was true at the time and while it turned out to be incorrect because discreet surveillance was commissioned by Deel, when written it was believed to be correct.

The judge said he wanted an explanation from Hayes via an affidavit.

On Thursday, Michael Cush SC said he was representing Hayes in relation to the judge’s request and he was looking for the matter to be dealt with as soon as possible.

Mr Justice Cregan said Mr Cush’s application was very timely because he had been reflecting on this matter and Mr Gardiner’s comments about him being unfair.

He said he was concerned about the Hayes letter but it was written on instructions from the client and it was an issue for Deel rather than Hayes. “So I had in fact been unfair,” he said.

He had been mulling over the matter and was considering asking the court registrar to write to Hayes as to whether the firm could write another letter “and that would be a solution”.

Mr Cush said that v
take instructions. F
attracted and they
instructions would



The Irish Times would like to send
you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser
notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow

ould first have to
e judge's comment
s written on

The judge said he would be prepared to deal with the matter on Friday. He was concerned about the administration of justice aspect of the matter (as Mr O'Brien will be a witness in the Rippling case).

He felt the matter might be dealt with by a letter from Hayes correcting the record but he would leave that to be dealt with on Friday.



Join The Irish Times on [WhatsApp](#) and stay up to date



Sign up to the [Business Today](#) newsletter for the latest new and commentary in your inbox



Listen to [Inside Business](#) podcast for a look at business and economics from an Irish perspective

High Court

IN THIS SECTION

Rachel Reeves to put on a brave face in Mansion House address



Shortlists for annual Business to Arts Awards announced



The Irish Times would like to send you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow



Irish tech firm Konversational to generate additional €5m revenue via US expansion



Wholesale electricity prices fall to lowest level since April 2024



Make America affordable again



MOST READ >

EV owners have their say: 'After five years of EV ownership, we will switch back to petrol or diesel'



Woman who suffered
giving birth fails i



The Irish Times would like to send
you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser
notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow



Construction firm sues for €7.4m over alleged
defects in glazing to Dublin office block



Met Éireann warning for heavy rain and
possible thunderstorms in effect for four
counties



Retired garda can challenge Garda
Commissioner over loss of Irish-speaking
allowance, court rules



LATEST STORIES >

‘How are you holding up?’: I don’t know
if I have the words to describe how I am

Donegal’s Titanic: The sinking housing
estate of Radharc An Seascan

We need to talk about
ecological impact

Liam Cahill and Tip
vindication against



The Irish Times would like to send
you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser
notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow

t on a brave face in
ress

THE IRISH TIMES Business Today

Business Today

Get the latest business news and commentary from our expert business team in your inbox
every weekday morning

Sign up



Subscribe

Support

About Us

Irish Times Products & Services



The Irish Times would like to send you push notifications.

Website notifications can be changed in browser notifications preferences.

Don't Allow

Allow



OUR PARTNERS:



THE IRISH TIMES



[Terms & Conditions](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Cookie Information](#)

[Cookie Settings](#)

[Community Standards](#)

[Copyright](#)

© 2025 The Irish Times DAC